

Message Text

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R 281742Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4903
INFO USLO PEKING
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USUN
AMEMBASSY MADRID

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 19004

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: FR, CH, UR, IT
SUBJECT: FRENCH VIEWS ON CHINA

SUMMARY. IN THE COURSE OF A JUNE 27 PERIODIC TOUR
D'HORIZON CONCERNING CHINA, THE QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR
FOR ASIA, LECLERCQ, SAID HIS GOVERNMENT THOUGHT ONE OF
THE PRINCIPAL RECENT CHANGES IN PRC FOREIGN POLICY WAS
A HARDENING OF PEKING'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US. THE
FRENCH HAD GATHERED FROM STATEMENTS TO THEIR DIPLOMATS
BY CHINESE OFFICIALS THAT THE CHINESE CONCERN ABOUT
THE "WEAKNESS" OF THE NEW AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION WAS
THE RESULT OF THE "SOFT" US POLICY IN AFRICA. TAIWAN
WAS NOT THE IMPORTANT ISSUE, THE USSR WAS. PEKING
WAS ALSO CONFUSED BY THE EMPHASIS PLACED ON HUMAN
RIGHTS. PEKING'S VIEW OF EUROCOMMUNISM HAD EVOLVED
SOMEWHAT; ALTHOUGH THEY WERE STILL INTERESTED IN
EXPLOITING ANY CONFLICTS WITH THE USSR, THEY ALSO
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THOUGHT IT NECESSARY TO ATTACK THE PRINCIPLE OF COMING
TO POWER BY ELECTIONS, NOT REVOLUTION. ON THE OTHER
HAND, PEKING APPEARED TO THINK ITALY COULD BE MADE
STRONGER AND MORE STABLE BY PCI PARTICIPATION IN THE
GOVERNMENT. LECLERCQ THOUGHT THAT CHINESE INTERNAL
POLITICS INCLUDED CONTINUING STRUGGLES OVER THE ROLE TO
BE GIVEN TO TENG HSIAO-P'ING AND THE PRIORITY OF

MILITARY VERSUS ECONOMIC CONSTRUCTION, BUT THAT THESE CONTESTS WERE BEING RESOLVED WITHOUT DESTROYING BASIC OVERALL UNITY. END SUMMARY.

1. PRC RELATIONS WITH THE US.

LECLERCQ THOUGHT THAT ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL CHANGES IN CHINESE POLICY WAS THE HARDENING OF THE LINE TOWARD THE US. THERE HAD NOT ONLY BEEN THE OPEN, PUBLIC ATTACKS ON THE US IN WHICH THE US WAS PUT ALMOST ON THE SAME FOOTING AS THE USSR (SUCH AS THE CLAIM THE US SUPPORTS RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA) BUT IN ADDITION CHINESE OFFICIALS HAD RECENTLY BEEN MOST OUTSPOKEN WITH FRENCH DIPLOMATS IN PEKING AND ELSEWHERE ON THE SUBJECT. THE FRENCH ALSO UNDERSTOOD THAT THE ITALIANS HAD RECENTLY BEEN THE RECIPIENTS OF A SERIES OF SHARP CHINESE CRITIQUES OF THE US. THE FRENCH HAD CONCLUDED THAT THE NEW CHINESE DISSATISFACTION WITH THE US WAS OVER THE US POSITION TOWARD SOVIET ACTIONS IN AFRICA. ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE RECENT PRESS CRITIQUES HAD MENTIONED THE US POSTURE CONCERNING TAIWAN, THE FRENCH THOUGHT THESE CRITIQUES WERE MERELY SYMPTOMATIC; THE REAL CHINESE COMPLAINT IS THAT THE US LOOKED ON WITH SUCH INDULGENCE, AND OCCASIONALLY APPROVAL, ON SOVIET AND CUBAN ACTIONS IN AFRICA, SPECIFICALLY THE SHABA INVASION. THE CHINESE HAD TOLD THE FRENCH THAT THE

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NEW US ADMINISTRATION WAS NAIVE AND JUST DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE SOVIETS. THE US JUST DID NOT TAKE SERIOUSLY THE ROLE THE SOVIETS WERE PLAYING IN AFRICA WHICH COULD PERMANENTLY ALTER THE SITUATION THERE. THE CHINESE ALSO SAID IT WAS ALSO INCREDIBLE THAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG AND EVEN PRESIDENT CARTER SHOULD SAY THAT THE CUBANS, WHO WERE MERELY TOOLS OF THE SOVIETS, COULD PRODUCE ANY IMPROVEMENT IN THE SITUATION ANYWHERE. ANY "STABILITY" WOULD BE FOR THE ADVANTAGE OF THE USSR AND THE DISADVANTAGE OF EVERYONE ELSE.

2. WHEN THE FRENCH RESPONDED THAT THE US HAD SHOWN FIRMNESS TOWARD THE USSR BY ITS POSITION ON SALT AND HUMAN RIGHTS, THE CHINESE DISMISSED THESE TWO AREAS AS

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NOT SIGNIFICANT. ACCORDING TO LECLERCQ, THE CHINESE
CLEARLY THOUGHT IT WAS THE US FAILURE OF UNDERSTANDING
AND WILL IN AFRICA WHICH WAS THE ACID TEST OF USG
RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE USSR.

3. THE CHINESE WERE ALSO VERY LEERY ABOUT THE USG
CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. LECLERCQ DID NOT THINK THAT
IT WAS BECAUSE THE CHINESE RECORD IN THIS AREA GAVE
THE PRC CAUSE FOR CONCERN -- LECLERCQ THOUGHT PEKING
VULNERABLE, BUT THE CHINESE APPEARED NOT TO THINK SO.
THE FRENCH THOUGHT THAT THE CHINESE OBJECTION TO THIS
PREOCCUPATION OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WAS THAT IT
REVEALED A LACK OF REALISM, WHICH WOULD MEAN A SOFT
US POSITION IN THE FACE OF REAL DANGERS. (LECLERCQ
ALSO COMMENTED THAT THE CHINESE WOULD NOT BE IMPRESSED
BY US PROTESTATIONS OF MORALITY -- ONLY THE CHINESE
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CAN REALLY BE MORAL. LECLERCQ THOUGHT THE PRC
POSITION ON NIXON AFTER WATERGATE SHOWED HOW IRRELEVANT
THEY CONSIDERED US MORALITY.)

4. LECLERCQ SAID THAT IT APPEARED THAT THE CHINESE WERE NOT PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN TALKING ABOUT VANCE AS A SEPARATE FACTOR IN US FOREIGN RELATIONS (UNLIKE KISSINGER). THEY SPOKE OF CARTER AND HIS POLICIES, AND DID NOT DISCUSS VANCE, BREZINSKI, ET AL.

5. THE FRENCH CONCLUDED THAT LITTLE WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED DURING THE AUGUST VISIT OF THE SECRETARY TO PEKING. IT WOULD PROVIDE A CHANCE FOR A FIRST CONTACT TO BE MADE AND CERTAINLY FOR THE CHINESE TO PUSH THEIR IDEAS DIRECTLY WITH THE SECRETARY. LECLERCQ THOUGHT THE VISIT WAS PERHAPS A BIT LATE -- OR TOO EARLY -- FOR CONCRETE ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

6. PRC AND EUROCOMMUNISM

LECLERCQ THOUGHT THAT THERE HAD RECENTLY BEEN A FURTHER EVOLUTION IN THE PRC PERCEPTION OF EURO-COMMUNISM. FOR OVER A YEAR THE CHINESE HAD BEEN PREPARED TO CONSIDER THAT A SUFFICIENTLY INDEPENDENT EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTY COULD CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR THE USSR, AND THEREFORE IT WAS A TREND TO BE ENCOURAGED. HOWEVER, CHINA HAD RECENTLY MADE IT VERY CLEAR THAT OPPOSITION TO THE USSR WAS NOT SUFFICIENT TO EARN THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING A FRATERNAL PARTY. THE EUROCOMMUNIST PARTIES WHICH SOUGHT TO COME TO POWER THROUGH THE BALLOT BOX (SUCH AS THE ITALIAN AND SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTIES) WERE REVISIONIST EVEN THOUGH THEY MIGHT NOT BE THE TOOLS
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OF SOCIALIMPERIALISM. AS FOR THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY, THE CHINESE WERE EVEN MORE NEGATIVE; THEY CONTINUED TO POINT OUT THAT THE CPF FAITHFULLY FOLLOWED EVERY TWIST OF THE SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY LINE. THE FRENCH HAD THEREFORE CONCLUDED THAT THE CHINESE WOULD PUT LITTLE FAITH IN THE "INDEPENDENT LINE" OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES AND WOULD CONTINUE TO TALK ABOUT THE NECESSITY OF THE STRENGTHENING OF EUROPE AND THE CONTINUATION OF THE US ROLE IN EUROPEAN DEFENSE. IT WAS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE CHINESE WERE TOYING WITH THE IDEA THAT THE PARTICIPATION OF THE PC ITALY IN THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE A WAY OF DIMINISHING UNREST IN ITALY AND THEREBY STRENGTHENING ITALY WHICH THEY NOW CONSIDER ONE OF

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THE ELEMENTS ENFEEBLING EUROPEAN DEFENSE AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT. THIS VIEW WOULD NOT, HOWEVER, RESULT IN
THE CHINESE ALTERING THEIR VIEW OF THE NECESSITY OF
A STRONG EUROPEAN DEFENSE EFFORT IN CONJUNCTION WITH
THE US.

7. INTERNAL PRC POLITICS.

THE FRENCH THOUGHT THAT HUA KUO-FENG WAS CONTINUING
TO STRENGTHEN HIS POSITION, WHICH WAS STILL FAR FROM
PREPONDERANT. THE FRENCH WERE STILL BEING TOLD IN
PEKING THAT THERE WOULD BE A BIG MEETING WHICH WOULD
RETURN TENG TO A SUITABLE POSITION AT THE PROPER TIME.
THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN PEKING CONSIDERS THAT EACH
DAY TENG'S FORMAL REHABILITATION IS DELAYED REPRE-
SENTS A FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF HUA'S POSITION. THE
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FRENCH THOUGHT THAT THE DEBATE OVER THE PRIORITY TO
BE ACCORDED THE MODERNIZATION OF DEFENSE HAD BEEN

SETTLED BY A COMPROMISE IN WHICH THE MILITARY RECOGNIZED THAT, IN THE LONGER RUN, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION HAD TO BE BASED ON AN ADVANCED ECONOMIC SYSTEM. LECLERCQ THOUGHT THAT DESPITE THIS "COMPROMISE" WE HAD NOT HEARD THE LAST FROM THE PROPONENTS OF GREATER MILITARY EXPENDITURES. HE THOUGHT THAT CERTAIN SECTORS, SUCH AS THE NAVY, HAD PERHAPS BEEN GIVEN SOME SPECIAL CONSIDERATION.

8. NEW PRC AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE.

THE GOF HAS NOT RECEIVED ANY INDICATION WHEN THE NEW PRC AMBASSADOR, HAN K'O-HUA, WILL ARRIVE IN PARIS. THEY EXPECT THAT HIS WIFE WILL BE THE FIRST COUNSELLOR (AS WAS TSENG T'AO'S WIFE) WHICH MEANS THAT UNLESS SOME SPECIAL "NUMBER THREE" IS SENT, THE EMBASSY WILL BE IN THE HANDS OF A RATHER INEFFECTIVE CHARGE WHENEVER THE AMBASSADOR RETURNS TO PEKING FOR CONSULTATIONS.
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